UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/073,495	02/11/2002	William A. Stevens, JR.	042390.P9143	6012

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Lawrence E. Lycke
BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP
Seventh Floor
12400 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90025-1026

EXAMINER
CHEN, TSE W

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2116	

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	01/05/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

	Application No.	Applicant(s)
Office Action Summary	10/073,495	STEVENS, ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Tse Chen	2116

-- *The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address* --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _20 November 2006_.

2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.   2b) ☐ This action is non-final.

3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) ☒ Claim(s) _42-57_ is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) ☒ Claim(s) _42-57_ is/are rejected.

7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on _11 February 2002_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:

      1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

      3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1.   The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the "invoking a function contained in a third firmware module during a dispatch of the earlier firmware module or the later firmware module, wherein the third firmware module is dispatched before the function contained in the third firmware module is invoked"; "two of the firmware modules are to initialize hardware components to perform the function, one of the two firmware modules is to initialize a hardware component that is not present in the system, two of the firmware modules are to be dispatched before the volatile memory is initialized"; "the hardware component is a System Management Bus controller" must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet"

pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will

be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The

objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Objections

2.   Claim 54 is objected to because of the following informalities: "two of the firmware

modules are to be dispatched" should be "said two of the firmware modules are to be

dispatched". Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3.   The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making
> and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it
> pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode
> contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

4.   Claim 48 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the

written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described

in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that

the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Applicant did not disclose "invoking a function contained in a third firmware module during a

dispatch of the earlier firmware module or the later firmware module, wherein the third firmware

module is dispatched before the function contained in the third firmware module is invoked" in

the original specification. Examiner was not able to find any disclosure on how the claimed

method is able to invoke a function contained in a third firmware module during a dispatch of

one of the two initial firmware modules, when the third firmware module is dispatched

subsequent to the two initial firmware modules. Examiner will take the position that the function

is invoked after the third firmware module is dispatched [i.e., after the two initial firmware

modules] in order to apply prior art.

5.   The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

6.   Claim 57 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for

failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as

the invention. Examiner submits that the SMBus standard inherently have different limitations

associated with different versions that would affect the metes and bounds of the claimed system.

As such, the claimed "SMBus controller" is indefinite without a specified version. Examiner will

take the position that the particular SMBus version is 1.0 in order to apply prior art.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

7.   The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the

basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

8.   Claims 42, 48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Stevens, US

Patent 6633976.

9.   In re claim 42, Stevens discloses a method comprising [col.2, 1.48 – col.3, 1.15]:

o   Examining two firmware modules [e.g., module to initialize CPU, module to initialize

     memory] to determine a required order of dispatch of the firmware modules.

- Dispatching an earlier of the two firmware modules and then dispatching a later of the two firmware modules [ordered execution of initialization modules results in one module being the earlier and the other being the later].

- Initializing a system memory after dispatching the two firmware modules [system memory is initialized after initialization modules are dispatched].

10.   As to claim 48, Stevens taught each and every limitation of the claim as discussed above. Stevens discloses invoking a function [e.g., sequential execution] contained in a third firmware module [e.g., dispatch manager], wherein the third firmware module is dispatched before the function contained in the third firmware module is invoked [firmware module is dispatched first before function in firmware module can be executed] [col.3, ll.1-6; function invoked after third firmware module is dispatched as discussed above].

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

11.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

12.   Claims 43-44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevens as applied to claim 42 above, and further in view of Patel, US Patent 5999989.

13.   Stevens taught each and every limitation of the claim as discussed above. Stevens did not discuss a resource list and did not disclose explicitly examining a platform to determine whether hardware to be initialized by the module is present in the platform.

14.   In re claim 43, Patel discloses, wherein examining comprises checking a resource list of each of the two firmware modules [col.8, ll.6-46; col.12, ll.7-18].

15.   In re claim 44, Patel discloses, wherein each of the two modules examines a platform to determine whether hardware to be initialized by the module is present in the platform [col.14, ll.13-26].

16.   It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Stevens and Patel before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the system taught by Stevens to include the teachings of Patel, in order to obtain the claimed system. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to make such a combination as it provides a way to enhance the robustness of BIOS operation [Patel: col.1, ll.51-56; e.g., Patel's teaching enhances Stevens' early initialization by enabling the determination of whether the system memory or required resources is present or not].

17.   Claims 45-47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevens as applied to claim 42 above, and further in view of Ayers et al., US Patent 6353924, hereinafter Ayers.

18.   Stevens taught each and every limitation of the claim as discussed above. Stevens did not disclose explicitly marking a data structure after dispatching a firmware module.

19.   In re claim 45, Ayers discloses a method comprising marking a data structure [e.g., table] after dispatching a firmware module [e.g., block], wherein the data structure is to indicate whether the firmware module has been dispatch [col.4, ll.51-58].

20.   As to claim 46, Ayers discloses, wherein the data structure is a bit array [circular buffer] [col.4, ll.17-19].

21.   As to claim 47, Ayers discloses, wherein the data structure is held in a processor register [col.4, ll.5-16].

22.   It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Stevens and Ayers before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the system taught by Stevens to include the explicit well known data structure teachings of Ayers, as using data structures to record an event [e.g., dispatched firmware module] is very well known and suitable for use in the system of Stevens. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to make such a combination as it provides a very well known way to record events and aid debugging efforts [Ayers: col.1, ll.1-30].

23.   Claim 49 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevens as applied to claim 48 above, and further in view of Katayama et al., US Publication 20010007119, hereinafter Katayama.

24.   Stevens taught each and every limitation of the claim as discussed above. Stevens discloses scanning to find a module that operates with a hardware component present in the platform and invoking the function if such a module is found [col.6, ll.10-48]. Stevens did not disclose explicitly the firmware modules being arranged in a daisy chain.

25.   Katayama discloses a method comprises a daisy chain of [firmware] modules [e.g., 85, 91] [0107-0109].

26.   It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Stevens and Katayama before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the system taught by Stevens to include the explicit well known daisy chain teachings of Katayama, as using daisy chains to organize related objects [e.g., firmware module] is very well known and suitable

for use in the system of Stevens. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to

make such a combination as it provides a very well known way to organize data that allows

continuous access without the data being required to be stored in a continuous location

[Katayama: 0109].

27.   Claims 50-51, 53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Patel,

US Patent 5999989.

28.   In re claim 50, Patel discloses a computer-readable medium [system ROM] containing

instructions to cause a programmable processor [e.g., CPU] to perform operations [col.2,.ll.39-

49; col.3, ll.40-43] comprising determining dependencies among a plurality of firmware modules

[option ROMs associated with devices] based on information about services imported [part of

ROM header data structure] and exported [via register arguments] by each of the firmware

modules [col.1, ll.51-56; col.7, ll.1-42; col.8, ll.6-46].

29.   Patel did not disclose explicitly dispatching each module of the plurality of firmware

modules in an order that satisfies the dependencies. Examiner hereby takes Official Notice that it

is well known in the art to dispatch modules in an order based on dependencies. It would have

been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Patel before him at the

time the invention was made, to explicitly have the modules dispatched in an order based on

dependencies, as the meaning of dependencies inherently involves an ordering [e.g., parent must

come before child].

30.   Patel did not disclose explicitly initializing a volatile system memory after dispatching

the plurality of firmware modules. However, Patel discloses dispatching the plurality of firmware

modules without a volatile system memory [system RAM] [col.3, ll.44-48]. It would have been

obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Patel before him at the time the

invention was made, to explicitly have the volatile system memory initialized after dispatching

the plurality of firmware modules. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to

include the explicit detail as a way to conserve memory resources.

31.   As to claim 51, Patel discloses, wherein the information about services imported and

exported by a firmware comprises an export table [interrupt table] containing at least one service

provided by the firmware module [col.7, ll.1-29; col.8, ll.6-46; interrupts associated with calls].

32.   As to claim 53, Patel discloses, wherein dispatching a module comprises saving a return

address in a processor register [far return to POST; address saved in processor register as is well

known in the art] and executing a beginning instruction of the module [e.g., performs device

specific write-protection] [col.7, ll.1-29, ll.43-47].

33.   Claim 52 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Patel as applied

to claim 50 above, and further in view of Ayers as applied to claim 45 and 47 above.

34.   Claims 54-56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevens, US

Patent 6633976, in view of Patel, US Patent 5999989.

35.   In re claim 54, Stevens discloses a system [fig.2] comprising:

- A hardware component [e.g., 11] to perform a function [e.g., execute instructions].

- A volatile memory [13] that can store data after the volatile memory is initialized.

- A non-volatile memory [15, 20a] containing a BIOS including a BIOS core and a

    plurality of firmware modules [16, 17, n modules in 20a].

- Wherein two of the firmware modules [e.g., module to initialize CPU, module to
  initialize system memory] are to initialize hardware components [e.g., cpu, system
  memory] to perform the function [col.2, ll.4-11; col.3, ll.1-3].

- Said two of the firmware modules are to be dispatched before the volatile memory is
  initialized [col.3, ll.1-3].

36.   Stevens did not disclose the situation where a hardware component is not present in the
system.

37.   Patel discloses a system [analogous to Stevens] wherein one of the two firmware modules
is to initialize a hardware component [devices] that is not present in the system [fig.2; col.6,
ll.10-47; if one of the hardware component is not present, steps 206-218 are repeated with one of
the firmware module taken out of dispatched allocation map].

38.   It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of
Stevens and Patel before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the system taught by
Stevens to include the teachings of Patel, in order to obtain the claimed system. One of ordinary
skill in the art would have been motivated to make such a combination as it provides a way to
enhance the robustness of BIOS operation [Patel: col.1, ll.51-56; e.g., Patel's teaching enhances
Stevens' early initialization by enabling the determination of whether the system memory is
present or not].

39.   As to claim 55, Stevens discloses, wherein the volatile memory is a RAM [col.4, l.37].

40.   As to claim 56, Stevens discloses, wherein the non-volatile memory is at least one of a
ROM or a flash memory [col.5, ll.1-26].

41.   Claim 57 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stevens and Patel

as applied to claim 54 above, and further in view of Hudson et al., US Patent 6173350,

hereinafter Hudson.

42.   Stevens taught each and every limitation of the claim as discussed above. Stevens did not

disclose the details of the SMBus controller.

43.   Hudson discloses a system wherein the hardware component is a SMBus controller

[col.2, ll.11-33].

44.   It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of

Hudson, Stevens and Patel before him at the time the invention was made, to modify the system

taught by Stevens and Patel to include the explicit well known SMBus standard as taught by

Hudson, as the SMBus standard is suitable for use with the system of Stevens and Patel. One of

ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to make such a combination as it provides an

expandable architecture while reducing pin counts [Hudson: col.2, ll.11-33].

Response to Arguments

45.   Applicant's arguments filed November 20, 2006 have been considered but are moot in

view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

46.   Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this

Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a).

Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

        A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE

MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO
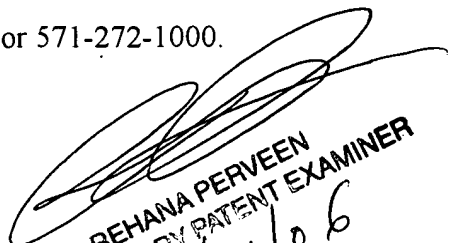
MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after

the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period

will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37

CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event,

however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this

final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Tse Chen whose telephone number is (571) 272-3672. The

examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 9AM - 5PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Rehana Perveen can be reached on (571) 272-3676. The fax phone number for the

organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent

Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications

may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished

applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR

system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR

system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would

like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated

information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Tse Chen
December 10, 2006

REHANA PERVEEN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
12/21/06